

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 08860 111631Z

51

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5279

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

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UNCLAS BEIRUT 8860

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PI S CASC (MORGAN, ERNEST)

SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF ABDUCTION OF COL. MORGAN

1. SUMMARY PRESS COVERAGE OF MORGAN CASE JULY 11
HIGHLIGHTS, IN ADDITION TO NEW MESSAGES AND TAPES PREVIOUSLY
REPORTED, REJECTION FRONT'S DISAVOWAL OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR
MORGAN KIDNAPPING, POSSIBILITY OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION
IN MORGAN CASE, CONTINUING LEBANESE AND PALESTINIAN
EFFORTS TO OBTAIN MORGAN'S RELEASE, AND ALLEGED U.S.
ACCEPTANCE OF KIDNAPPER'S CONDITIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN STATEMENT ISSUED AT PRESS CONFERENCE JULY 10,
QUOTE FRONT OF PALESTINIAN FORCES REJECTING SURRENDERIST
SOLUTIONS UNQUOTE (REJECTION FRONT) STATED, INTER ALIA,
THAT QUOTE MORGAN CASE CONCERNS LEBANESE REVOLUTIONARY
SOCIALIST ACTION ORGANIZATION, WHICH IS ENTITLED TO
TO TAKE STANDS THAT WILL SERVE CAUSE OF TOILING LEBANESE MASSES
UNQUOTE. ASKED IF REJECTION FRONT HAD ANY CONNECTION WITH
REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST ACTION ORGANIZATION, SPOKESMAN ABU
AL-ABBAS DENIED ANY SUCH LINK, BUT SAID THAT QUOTE WE SUPPORT
ANY REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION THAT ADOPTS POSITION AGAINST THE
SETTLEMENT AND AGAINST SURRENDER. WE ARE A REVOLUTIONARY
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 08860 111631Z

ORGANIZATION, AND WE WILL IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZE ANY REVOLUTIONARY

GROUP UNQUOTE. ASKED IF REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST ACTION ORGANIZATION WAS IN FACT REAL ORGANIZATION, ABU AL-ABBAS SAID QUOTE WHEN PEOPLE DELCARE THEMSELVES, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THEM. I AS A REVOLUTIONARY RECOGNIZE ALL REVOLUTIONARY TASKS, AND MORGAN'S KIDNAPPING IS A REVOLUTIONARY TASK. BUT WE DID NOT KIDNAP ANYONE. WE ONLY ARRESTED SOME ARMED MEN WHO WERE FIGHTING US DURING THE EVENTS UNQUOTE.

3. ON POSSIBILITY OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION IN MORGAN CASE, LEADING PRO-PLO "AL-MUHARRIR" QUOTE HAS LEARNED FROM RELIABLE LEBANESE SOURCES THAT TWO SENIOR OFFICERS FROM SYRIA ARRIVED IN BEIRUT YESTERDAY MORNING ON MISSION CONNECTED WITH COLONEL MORGAN. THESE SOURCES DID NOT INDICATE WHETHER OFFICERS HAD ARRIVED AT INVITATION OF LEBANESE AUTHORITIES OR AT SYRIAN INITIATIVE. IT IS SAID THAT OFFICERS UNDERTOOK RAPID CONTACTS WITH SOME QUARTERS WITH INFLUENCE OVER KIDNAPPERS AND REQUESTED THEM TO TURN AMERICAN OFFICER OVER TO THEM. IT IS ALSO SAID THAT AMONG THESE INFLUENTIAL QUARTERS ARE SOME WHO WOULD REFUSE TO TURN OFFICER OVER TO SYRIA BUT WOULD PREFER TO TURN HIM OVER THROUGH THE PERSONALITY WHO WAS CONTACTED AT THE BEGINNING AND WHO TRANSMITTED TO RESISTANCE AND AUTHORITIES QUASI-CONFIRMATION THAT OFFICER WOULD NOT BE EXECUTED, BUT WOULD BE RELEASED IN MATTER OF HOURS UNQUOTE.

4. INDEPENDENT "AL-BAYRAQ", WHICH HAS CLOSE GOL CONNECTIONS, CARRIED SIMILAR REPORT: QUOTE INFORMED SOURCES... SAID THAT CONTACTS WERE MADE YESTERDAY TO FIND SOLUTION TO MORGAN PROBLEM SUCH THAT HE WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO SYRIAN GOVERNMENT, AND DAMASCUS WOULD DETERMINE HIS FATE, EITHER BY CONTINUING TO DETAIN HIM OR BY TURNING HIM OVER TO AMERICAN EMBASSY. IT WAS SAID THAT AGREEMENT ON THIS HAD BEEN REACHED UNQUOTE.

5. IN SAME VIEN, LEADING INDEPENDENT "AN-NAHAR" BANNERS QUOTE ARAB QUARTER INTERVENES TO FREE MORGAN UNQUOTE AND REPORTS: QUOTE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT TOOK PLACE YESTERDAY.... INFORMED SOURCES REVEALED THAT INFLUENTIAL ARAB QUARTER HAD INTERVENED IN THIS CASE AND UNDERTAKEN CONTACTS AND SOME STEPS WITH CERTAIN QUARTERS TO ASSURE MORGAN'S RELEASE. IT APPEARED THAT HIS UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 08860 111631Z

QUARTER ATTACHES SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO CASE OF KIDNAPPED COLONEL UNQUOTE.

6. REGARDING LEBANESE EFFORTS, "AN-NAHAR" STATED THAT QUOTE ON LEBANESE LEVEL, OPTIMISM REIGNED YESTERDAY. REPORTS CIRCULATED THAT MORGAN WOULD BE TURNED OVER BEFORE EXPIRY OF NEW DEADLINE. PRIMIN RASHID KARAME SAID BEGIN INNER QUOTE WE HOPE STRONGLY TO OBTAIN RELEASE

OF COLONEL MORGAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE END INNER
QUOTE. YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, PRIMIN KARAME MET MR. TAYSIR
QUB'A, MEMBER OF PFLP POLITBURO, AND STUDIED COLONEL'S CASE
WITH HIM UNQUOTE.

7. REGARDING PALESTINIAN EFFORTS, "AN-NAHAR" REPORTED
THAT QUOTE ON PALESTINIAN LEVEL, PLO EXOMM HELD MEETING
FROM EIGHT TO MIDNIGHT UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP OF MR. YASIR
ARAFAT. INFORMED SOURCES SAID THAT FIRST SUBJECT WAS
MORGAN AFFAIR. THERE WAS EMPHASIS ON NECESSITY OF
ENFORCING ALL MEASURES TO PREVENT EXCESSES, SABOTAGE,
AND HARM TO LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN BROTHERHOOD. MR. ZUHAIR
MUHSIN, HEAD OF MILITARY DEPARTMENT, SAID TO "AN-NAHAR"
BEGIN INNER QUOTE I AM OPTIMISTIC THAT MORGAN CASE WILL BE SOLVED
WITHIN 24 HOURS END INNER AND OUTER QUOTE.

8. REGARDING ANOTHER ASPECT OF REPORTED PALESTINIAN EFFORTS,
"AL-BAYRAQ" WRITES: QUOTE INFORMED SOURCES SAID
THAT PLACE IN WHICH KIDNAPPED AMERICAN COLONEL MORGAN WAS BEING
DETAINED HAS NOW BEEN SURROUNDED BY ELEMENTS OF PLO, WHICH INSISTS
THAT HE BE TURNED OVER TO THEM. THIS HAS BEEN DONE TO PREVENT ANY
ATTEMPT TO SMUGGLE HIM TO ANOTHER QUARTER UNQUOTE.

9. ON QUESTION OF ACCEDING TO KIDNAPPERS' DEMANDS, LEFTIST
PRO-FEDAYEEN "AL-LIWA" ALLEGES THAT QUOTE INFORMATION
FROM LEBANESE SOURCES INDICATES THAT DEADLINE WAS EXTENDED
AFTER AMEMBASSY INFORMED SOME MEDIATORS OF ITS AGREEMENT
TO CONDITIONS OF KIDNAPPERS. THESE MEDIATORS ALSO OBTAINED
SIMILAR LEBANESE AGREEMENT. IT WAS AGREED TO RELEASE MORGAN WITH
IN NEXT 24 HOURS UNQUOTE.

10. TAKING DIFFERENT SLANT, PRO-EGYPTIAN "AL-YAWM" WRITES:
QUOTE WE HAVE LEARNED FROM PROMINENT PALESTINIAN SOURCE
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PAGE 04 BEIRUT 08860 111631Z

THAT AMERICAN AMBASSADOR CONTACTED PRIMIN RASHID KARAME
AND INFORMED HIM OF HIS COUNTRY'S ACCEPTANCE OF CONDITIONS
OF REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST ACTION ORGANIZATION. PRIMIN KARAME
IN TURN CONTACTED LEADING PALESTINIAN PERSONALITY
AND STUDIED MATTER WITH HIM. THEREUPON, IT WAS DECIDED NOT
TO FULFILL ORGANIZATION'S CONDITIONS BECAUSE FULFILLMENT OF ITS
DEMANDS WOULD CONSTITUTE DANGEROUS PRECEDENT UNQUOTE.
GODLEY

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